



Al-Risala 1985

February

Qur'an Scores over Modern Science

Dr. Keith Moore is chairman of the Anatomy Department of the University of Toronto, Canada. He has written two books on embryology, and has also spent some time at the King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, studying those verses of the Holy Quran that deal with the human embryo.

The results of his research have now been released. Dr. Moore said he was "amazed" at the scientific accuracy of the Quran's statements in the 7th century about the human development which western experts have learned only in the last 15 years. He went on to express a hope that the Quranic verses on the subject "may help to close the gap between science and religion that has existed for so many years." (*The Muslim*, Islamabad, December 24, 1984)

The results of Dr. Moore's research represent clear and irrefutable proof of the fact that the Quran is the Book of God. Only God has knowledge of all past and future events. The Quran's "graphic and accurate" account, 1400 years ago, of facts that have only come to light in the last 15 years, shows that the Quran is an exposition of divine knowledge; it proves that the Quran comes from God.

According to *The Muslim*, "Dr. Moore's statement was carried by almost all Canadian newspapers, and was circulated by the national news agency, the Canadian Press. The 'Ottawa Citizen' carried it on page one with a banner headline."

It is a matter for both concern and puzzlement that, while Muslims have concentrated all their attention in recent years on publicizing their political and nationalistic causes, it has been left to non-Muslims like Dr. Moore: and Dr. Bucaille before him, to bring people's attention to the true teachings of Islam. If Muslims were to make an effort to show the world how the teachings of the Quran stood up to scrutiny under the light of modern knowledge, then they would see the antagonism which confronts them when they espouse political and nationalistic causes evaporate; for truth is a common concern of all mankind. Everyone has a stake in truth. When truth comes out into the open, walls of prejudice crumble and fall.

Double Standards for Third World

The gas-leak tragedy in Bhopal, India (December 1984) was the greatest man-made disaster-outside war-in the history of mankind. Altogether 2500 people lost their lives, and thousands more have been permanently blinded or maimed.

Investigations that have followed the disaster have shown that safety precautions at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal were far inferior to those at similar plants in the United States. In India there are fewer inspectors to review the health and safety situation in factories. Laws controlling industrial safety are more lax, or less stringently enforced. This means that multinational companies like Union Carbide are able to operate with relative freedom in third world countries such as India. As Alex Brummer of The Guardian writes:

“As western multinational companies have spread their wings and invested in the third world, the iron rule of health and safety legislation and environmental laws is often left at home.” (*The Guardian Weekly*, December 16, 1984)

The New York Times reported that C.V. Tyson, one of the three inspectors who had made an “Operational Safety Survey” for Union Carbide in 1982, said that standards at the factory in Bhopal had not been up to those at a similar Union Carbide plant in Institution, West Virginia. Company officials admitted that the deadly poison which was accidentally released into the atmosphere in India should have been removed by scrubbers.

This is what happens when people follow limited, human laws. While they remain within the realm of jurisdiction of the laws to which they owe allegiance, then they are an epitome of legality and propriety. While outside that realm, however, they follow only the dictates of their own self-interest, sometimes with catastrophic consequences as witnessed in Bhopal.

The only way for people to follow consistent and universal norms of behaviour is for them to bow to the law of God rather than the law of man. Obedience to One God makes one treat all mankind as one: everyone becomes equally deserving of good and fair treatment. God’s law is universally applicable, whereas the law of man applies in some places but not in others. There are no divisions in the world of God; it is only in the world of man that “third worlds” have been concocted where first-rate standards do not apply.

A Taste of Honey

Unlike bees man has failed to act on divine inspiration.

The Quran contains this illuminating insight into the life and work of bees:

"Your Lord inspired the bee to build its homes in the mountains, in the trees, and in the hives which men make for it. Then to feed on every kind of fruit, and follow the trodden paths of its Lord. From its belly comes forth a fluid of many hues, a healing drink for men. Surely in this there is a sign for those who would give thought." (16:68-69)

Thanks to scientific research in the last few decades, we now have considerable evidence at our disposal about how God "inspired the bees" to prepare this substance, in which there is remedy for mankind. In ancient times the efficaciousness of honey was well-known to man from personal experience, and it was widely used as a cure for various diseases. It was only in the twentieth century, however, that the remedial properties of honey were scientifically demonstrated-and considerable work remains to be done in this field.

Some of the ways in which honey destroys disease-producing germs were described in the September 1975 issue of the *Rosicrucian Digest* (San Jose, California). One of the persons to have conducted investigations into the properties of honey, the article said, is Dr. W.G. Sackett, formerly of the Fort Collins Agricultural College in Colorado, U.S.A. He commenced his research trying to prove that honey – like milk – was a carrier of infectious germs. Much to his surprise, however, he found that all the disease germs he introduced into pure honey were quickly destroyed: The germs that cause typhoid, for instance, died after 48 hours. Enteritidis, a germ causing intestinal inflation, lasted the same period. A hardy germ which causes broncho-pneumonia and septicemia held out for four days. *Bacillus Coli Communis*, which under certain conditions causes peritonitis, was dead on the fifth day of experiment. These startling results caused Dr. Sackett to alter his opinion of the properties of honey: far from being a carrier of diseases, it was a powerful destroyer of them.

According to Dr. Bolog Beck there are many other germs equally destructible in honey. The reason for honey's bactericidal quality, he says, lies in its hygroscopic ability. It literally draws every particle of moisture out of germs. When deprived of water germs, like any other living organism, perish. The power of honey to absorb moisture is almost unlimited: it will draw moisture from metal, glass and even stone crocks.

God inspired the bees to go about their work in a positive and constructive manner. The end result of their efforts is a remedial substance of immense benefit to man. In like manner God has shown man, through the prophets, the way to lead a constructive, upright life, thus finding his true place in the world and benefiting others. Unlike bees, however, man has failed to act on this divine inspiration. As a result of this failure he finds himself at odds both with nature and his fellow men. In a world where everything works for the benefit of the rest of creation, he sows the seeds of destruction both for himself and for others.

5 February 1985

A Life-Time of Devotion

For no less than forty years, Pandit Ashu Ram Arya, a Vedic scholar, has been busy completing his self-ordained mission to translate all of the four Vedas into Urdu.

He embarked upon his task when he was just 20 years old. Now he is in his 70th year.

Pandit Arya said in an interview that his life's mission would be completed next year when he finishes the translation of Sam Veda in Urdu and publishes it. Then for the first time, translation of all the four Vedas in Urdu will be available.

His translation of Yajurveda in Urdu was published this year and his translations of the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda are already being printed in New Delhi and Chandigarh.

Before him, several scholars have attempted to translate the Vedas into Urdu, but their efforts have taken them no further than putting the Hindi "Rig Veda Adi Bhashya Bhumika" (only the gist of the Vedas) into Urdu.

The Fate of the Greats

Umar Ibn Khattab was, in his capacity as Caliph, delivering a speech in Medina. One of the congregation rose and administered him this warning:

“By God, Umar, if we detect any crookedness in you then we will put you straight with our swords.”

Audacious and insolent though these words appear, Umar did not object to them; neither did anyone in the congregation challenge the man's right to address Umar in this way. The Companions were used to criticism of this nature among themselves. An atmosphere of healthy criticism, in which people had every right to speak their minds, endured for about two generations after the Prophet. There was no restriction on what people said, as long as they looked into a matter carefully before pronouncing judgment on it: only criticism without prior investigation was disapproved of.

There can only be one reason for the atmosphere of tolerance that prevailed during the time of the Companions and the generations that immediately succeeded them: for those people only God was great. They lived in awe of His greatness alone. As far as they were concerned all human beings were God's servants. Why should they object, then, when one person criticized another? They were conscious of only God's greatness, and criticism of one human being by another did not diminish anything from the greatness of God.

In modern times, however, things have changed. Try criticizing any leading personality, anyone who is great in the eyes of men; it does not matter how intellectually sound and well-researched one's criticism is, that person's followers will rise in anger. Clearly, the reason for this is that people attribute greatness to humans, and to see the objects of their veneration brought low is more than they can bear. This is true of Muslims just as much as others. “God is great” are just words they utter in prayer: in practice it is the greatness of others besides God that dominates their lives.

The aura of greatness that surrounds humans in this world has no real substance. It is just a facade put on for the test of men. It is those who can see through this facade, and realize that no one besides God has any real greatness, who will be successful in the next world, where only His greatness will remain. As for those who let the greatness of mere mortals rule their lives, their greatness will perish and they will be left out in the cold: the ones in whose shadow they had lived will be there no more to tower over them.

In a Position to Judge

Abu Moosa was one of the leading companions of the Prophet Mohammad. During the Prophet's time he was appointed governor of Aden. Then, during the rule of the second Caliph Umar, he was given the governorship of Basra.

Abu Moosa once said that a qazi should not pass judgment until the truth is to him "as clear as day." When Al-Ashari's statement was reported to Umar, the Caliph ratified it, saying that this should be the policy of every qazi.

In fact, the principle that Abu Moosa laid down is applicable, not only to judges, but to every human being. It is not only judges who have to deal with other people's cases: every human being is required at times to make decisions regarding matters pertaining to others. With an ordinary individual it is a personal decision that has to be made, with judges a judicial one. But it is a decision all the same. The only difference is that a judge's word is law, while ordinary people cannot enforce their decisions by legal means.

Still, everyone will finally have to answer before God for every utterance and judgment that he makes. In real terms, therefore, there is no difference between someone who passes judgment in a court of law, and one who makes a decision in the home, office or village. Both will be taken to task in exactly the same fashion. Those who believe that one day they will come before God should follow Abu Moosa Al-Ashari's advice: they should not pronounce judgment on a matter until the rights and wrongs of it have become as clear to them as day is clear from night; if the truth is not "as clear as day" then there is only one thing to do, and that is hold one's peace.

Those who really fear God should only pass judgment on matters which are absolutely clear to them. The judgment of what they are not clear about should be left to God.

The End of Life

Masti Venkatisar Aingar is a famous Kanda language writer. Now (1984) 94 years old, as a young man he went straight into the Mysore Civil Service from university. A conscientious civil servant, his seniority and ability qualified him for ministership, but he was treated unfairly and denied the promotion he deserved. Disillusioned, he went into premature retirement.

After his retirement he took to writing short stories and novels. With approximately 150 works to his credit, he became famous as an outstanding and prolific writer. For one of his books, *Chakaweera Rajinder*, he received the Gian Peth award from the India government, along with a Rs. 150,000 prize.

An interview which Mr. Masti gave to Sri Dhar was published in *The Times of India* (August 12, 1984). It appeared that, although Mr. Masti held his own works in high esteem, he was not particularly moved by the latest acknowledgement of his literary prowess. "I am too old to be happy," he said.

What Mr. Masti meant was that, at the age of 94, he was too old to appreciate any happiness. A sad end indeed to a literary career which spanned the larger part of a century. Mr. Masti's first book was published in 1912. He had to wait 70 years, then, for the award which should have crowned his efforts. But when the climax of his literary career came he was in no position to appreciate it. Old age had dampened his enthusiasm and made him indifferent to success.

The same is true of everyone in this world. Like Mr. Masti, everyone works for something here on earth, and exerts all his strength on achievement of a certain end. But it is only after a long period, in Mr. Masti's case 70 years, that one's efforts reap rewards. At that time one is too old to relish one's reward; besides, death may come at any time, closing the pages on the story of one's life and transporting one to another world. It is better to exert one's time and efforts in this world on preparations for the next world where all of us are bound.

8 February 1985

Emphasis on realities rather than formalities

Imam Abdur Rahman Auza'i (157-88AH) once said: "A moment of justice is better than a thousand months of worship."

Man-Made Dwarfism

Human babies are the most tender and weak of all the babies of living creatures. It, therefore, needs its parents' care and guidance for its physical and mental growth for a longer period. This is why nature has endowed parents with a special attraction for their offspring.

In the past, the separation of children from their parents was caused only by emergency situations – war or occasional premature death. In normal circumstances, it was taken for granted that the children would enjoy the protection of their parents for as long as they required it.

However, this exception has come to be a rule in modern, advanced societies. This is the outcome of the modern concept of life which has destroyed the sanctity of matrimony. Either the children are born out of wedlock or the couples get separated shortly after marriage. The result is one in both cases – alienation of children from their parents, because they are “orphaned” during the lifetime of their parents.

The increasing incidence of this kind of orphaning is creating complex problems in modern society, one of which has been termed “Deprivation Dwarfism”. The following are excerpts from a recent report by Western medical experts on this subject:

“Lack of love can stunt children’s physical growth, retard their intellect or even kill them.”

Medical experts have called the affliction deprivation dwarfism, a disease that used to kill many children in orphanages.

Pediatricians say that as late as 1915 some 90 per cent of the children who died in Baltimore, Maryland (the United States) orphanages within the first year of admission did so because of lack of love.

In deprivation dwarfism a child does not sleep properly and has trouble with his bowels.

Just as the human body can become dwarfed, so can the human spirit. The only cure for this is the tender, loving care which is engendered by love. There is no substitute for it, and the greatest love of all is the love of God.

Investing For the Future

A few days after being involved in a serious road accident near Lahore, in which his companion, film star Iqbal Hassan, was killed on the spot, Aslam Parwaiz, the famous star of many Urdu and Punjabi films, died in a Lahore hospital on November 21, 1984. He was brought to hospital from the scene of the crash in a coma, from which he never recovered.

In the later 1950's and early '60's Aslam Parwaiz was the most successful hero of Urdu and Punjabi films in Pakistan. His name was considered to be a guarantee of box-office success. He realized, however, that the film industry was an unpredictable trade, and would not provide him with an income forever. Accordingly, the money that he made from films he invested in other, more reliable ventures. In this way he ensured a continued income for himself after his name had faded from the spotlights. One commentator wrote after his death:

"From the very beginning he realized that a film career could not be the only source of one's income because a favourite hero of today is bound to fade away tomorrow. He thus intelligently invested his income in profitable ventures and was financially well-off." (*The Muslim*, Islamabad, November 22, 1984)

Like Aslam Parwaiz, many people are astute in affairs of the world. They realize that it is foolhardy to set store in something that is unreliable and impermanent. The truly astute person, however, is one who realizes this truth in the wider context of eternity. The 'heroes' of this world will appear worthless in the next world. The only ones, who will be well-off in the next, permanent world, will be ones who have invested for that life; ones who sent good actions before them, which will be of use to them there. One who fixed his gaze entirely on this world will be left with nothing but remorse and anguish when he reaches the next world. He will cry out in despair:

"Would that I had sent forth good deeds for this, my future life." (Quran, 89:24)

How strange that the cleverness people show with regard to the fleeting life of this world, they fail to show with regard to the everlasting life of the next world.

Predicting the Afterlife

The physicist Paul Dirac predicted the existence of “anti-matter” before it was observed. What Dirac did on a scientific level, the preacher of God’s word does on a spiritual level: he predicts the afterlife.

Perhaps one of the main reasons why people fail to attach them-selves to true religion in the modern age is that the teachings of religion cannot be observed or experienced in the normal scientific sense of the word. Belief in the afterlife, which is the very crux of true religion, appears to most people as particularly hypothetical and farfetched: if something cannot be seen, how can it be believed?

Scientific discoveries made in the 20th century, however, should have made it much easier for people to believe in the afterlife. In their initial stages most scientific discoveries have been no more than conclusions reached from theoretical, abstract data; they have constituted an inference of scientific “truths” from scientific “facts”. In several cases it has been many years before discoveries have been observed in the laboratory .Yet even before these discoveries had reached the experimental stage, they were accepted as facts: they were not denied on the basis of the theoretical and abstract method of their presentation.

The prediction by the Cambridge physicist Paul Dirac (1902-1984) of the existence of anti-matter was one such discovery. The first anti-particle to be discovered was the positron – the anti-particle to the electron. Its existence was first effectively predicted by Dirac in 1928. It was not until 1932, however, that the particle was detected in cosmic rays by C.D. Anderson. By that time Dirac was making new and far-reaching predictions on the basis of facts already at his disposal. As J.G. Crowther wrote in his obituary to the famed physicist, Dirac “was quick to perceive the general implications of his discovery.” In 1933 Dirac shared the Nobel Prize for physics with Erwin Schrodinger:

“In his address on receiving the reward he gave a virtually complete outline of anti-particles, anti-matter and even hinted at the anti-universe. He specially forecast the existence of a negative proton, which was not observed until 1955.”

(The Muslim, Islamabad, November 23, 1984)

Clearly Dirac’s prediction of everything from anti-particles to an anti-universe was based entirely on abstract theories. He had not observed anti-particles, nor had he experienced an anti-world; but he knew that the theoretical data at his disposal implied their existence. He started off with the laws of quantum theory and relativity, and conceived an equation to describe the motion of electrons in accordance with these laws. His equation made the spin of the electron a logical consequence of the union of relativity and quantum theory. The inference that he then made was that the equation for the electron implied the existence of another particle having the same mass and spin as an electron, but with a positive instead of a negative electric charge. This is the electron’s anti-particle, now known as a positron.

What Dirac did on a scientific level, the preacher of God’s word, one who calls mankind to belief in the afterlife, does on a spiritual level. He takes the “equation” of this world and sees that it implies, with

absolute certainty, the existence of an anti-world – the hereafter – to balance it out. This world is finite: there must be an infinite world as well, for otherwise this world will be incomplete. Injustice prevails in this world: there must be a world of absolute justice, for otherwise, in a world founded on principles of justice, injustice will persist, and that is inconceivable. Certain limitations are inherent to this world; opportunities and potentialities, on the other hand, are unlimited. There must be another world where our unlimited potentialities can find unlimited fulfillment. Without an “anti-world” this world is incomplete: the very existence of a finite, imperfect world implies the existence of another infinite, perfect one.

Dirac’s “discoveries” had not been observed when, in 1933, he expounded on them at length in his address on receiving the Nobel Prize. He was, however, so certain of the accuracy of his predictions that he was compelled to communicate them to others. So it is with the one who calls mankind to faith in the afterlife. He is so certain of his “discovery” of the life after death that he feels an obligation to convey the news to others.

And the latter, spiritual discovery, is no less certain than the former, scientific one. Indeed, it is one of the puzzles of the modern age that a world that has accepted Dirac’s “anti-matter” and “anti-universe” as ‘the leading physical ideas for explaining the character and contents of the contemporary universe, its origin, and history’, has yet to accept the concept of an anti-world in the spiritual sense of the word. Perhaps the reason for this is that no one has, in recent times, conveyed the concept of an anti-world – or hereafter – with the conviction that Dirac had when he put forward his idea of anti-matter.

Realization of Truth

The human mind is a mirror of reality. Everyone knows the function of a mirror: it reproduces anything that is placed in front of it. The image it produces corresponds exactly to the reflected object, leaving nothing out and adding nothing of its own. So it is with the human mind. When reality is placed before this mirror, it is reproduced exactly. The image of truth which is reflected in the human mind is exactly the same as that which stands before it. It recognises the truth for what it is, and accepts it as such.

This being the case, why is it that truth comes before many people, yet they fail to accept it? The answer to this question is that it is always personal attachments and commitments that prevent one from accepting truth. There can be no sound reason for denying the truth; those that do so are motivated by their attachment to something else which prevents them from attaching themselves to truth.

If a third object is placed in between a mirror and the thing that is meant to be reflected, then the image will be obscured. So it is with truth and the human mind. If something else comes in between the two, then the image of truth that should be cast on to the mind becomes obscured. It is essential; therefore, that nothing should be allowed to come in between oneself and truth: there should be nothing to prevent one from accepting it. This is a basic precondition for realizing the truth, yet it is one that people are usually unable to fulfill. All too often they let something else come in between themselves and the reality that has been placed before the mirror of their minds.

Sometimes it is people to whom one is attached who come in the way of truth. Sometimes it is self-interest, or some other commitment. In every day and age people have let some unconnected thing come in between themselves and truth, with the result that they remained bereft of what should have been lodged in their souls.

Abu Jahl was a major opponent of the Prophet Mohammad (may peace be upon him). He was prevented from accepting the truth by a concern for his own power and position. Taif was one of the places that the Prophet visited in his early days in Mecca. The people of Taif refused to accept the truth that he presented before them because he appeared to them to be an insignificant person. How, they thought, is truth being taught by one who does not rank high among the mighty of this world? As for the Jews, they also denied the Prophet Mohammad. The reason for them doing so was their superiority complex. The Roman Emperor Heraclius showed clear signs of recognizing the truth of the message of Islam. Yet he did not accept it, the reason being that he did not want to become isolated from his people: In each case the truth of Islam had been recognized. There was no sound reason for these people's denial, only their blind commitment to something else which they could not break away from.

Truth only accepts one who has accepted it without any reservation, who has given himself entirely up to it. Those who are attached to something else which they cannot break away from can never find truth, for they cannot give it the attention it demands. The only ones who can succeed in the search for truth are those who forsake everything else and give themselves up to it entirely when it comes before them.

14 February 1985

When people forget about death, they forget how to live

“Death is not the last taboo at all, but a very modern one. In this era of demystification, death becomes perverse and more mysterious, more terrible, than ever before. We need to have death back again. Its transcendence puts banalities, impotence, frustration, vanities, and some kinds of love, in their places. Contemplation of terminal issues is not in the least morbid, but life-enhancing.” (Linda Kurtz in *The Guardian Weekly*, November 25, 1984)

14 February 1985

Greatest theories those conceived independently of conventional thought

Paul Dirac (1902-1984) was once asked which he considered was the greatest scientific discovery of recent times. He pondered for a considerable time and then' said: "The General Theory of Relativity." When asked why he held this view he replied, after a further long silence, "Because it did not follow from what had gone before, it was out of the blue." (*The Muslim*, Islamabad, November 23. 1984)

The Courage That Comes From True Faith

The Battle of Qadsiya was a decisive battle between the forces of Islam and Persia. One of the soldiers in Sa'ad Ibn Waqqas' Muslim army was Abu Mehjan Thaqqi. He was an extremely brave fighter but he had one fault – a liking for liquor – which sometimes made him liable to punishment. When all other measures failed Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas imprisoned him in a tent. The battle continued for several days. Once Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas was wounded and had to issue directions to his army from a vantage point near his tent. On that day the Muslims were having difficulty resisting a determined Persian offensive. Abu Mehjan looked on in despair, which he expressed in these words:

“Alas that horses and spears should be doing battle. And I should be left out, tied up in chains.”

Abu Mehjan then sent a message to Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas' wife, asking her to unleash his chains and give him Sa'ad's horse and weapons. “If my life is spared,” he promised, “I will be the first to return from the field of battle to don my chains once more.” When Sa'ad's wife received this message she immediately untied Abu Mehjan's chains and entrusted her husband's horse and sword to him. Abu Mehjan charged out on horseback and joined the Muslim army. He fought with great valour, eliminating 'enemy soldiers wherever he went. Sa'ad Ibn Waqqas looked on in astonishment. “Who,” he thought, “is this intrepid horseman?”

Finally the Muslims won the day. As he had promised, Abu Mehjan immediately returned Sa'ad's horse and sword, and went back into the tent in which he had been prisoner. Before long Sa'ad also returned home. His wife asked how the battle had gone that day. “It was a very difficult day's fighting,” Sa'ad replied. “It was only a man sent by God, riding on a spotted horse, who saved the day. If I hadn't tied Abu Mehjan in chains, then I would have thought it was him, for only he can charge in that manner.” Sa'ad's wife then came out with the whole story. “By God, it was indeed Abu Mehjan,” she said. Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas then summoned Abu Mehjan and, unleashing his chains, said to him: “I promise not to punish you for drinking again.” Abu Mehjan Taqqi, for his part, replied: “I promise never to drink again.”

A real Muslim does not have to be punished in order to refrain from misdeeds. True faith cultivates a sense of honour and responsibility within a person, which make him respond positively to even the slightest hint or reminder. As for one who is devoid of these qualities, no punishment or rebuke – no matter how severe – will have any effect on him.

Man can not live by Bread Alone

Man cannot live by scepticism. He must have faith if he is to exist in this world. It is Islam alone which can respond to this human need.

Man strives to arrive at belief by employing reason. But the history of philosophy spanning over five thousand years shows that human reason has lead man nowhere but to skepticism. Owing to the limitations of human reason, universal realities can not be encompassed. After a certain stage, the human mind is incapable of apprehending reality as a whole. Thus the increase in human knowledge has brought us only to the point of understanding our limitations, as a scientist has aptly said:

“We know more and more about less and less.”

By contrast, a great source of faith is revelation. But since each of the many existing religions claims that its scriptures are of divine origin, the question of authenticity looms large. A serious study shows that these divine scriptures, through human interpolations, have been reduced to a set of superstitions, without historical credibility. Such versions should be rejected as distortions which are hardly calculated to uplift or enlighten the human mind and soul.

What survives the test of this historical credibility is Islam. The divine scripture of Islam, the Quran, is a book which has been preserved in the original. It is a document whose authenticity has been historically established. Its contents, far from contradicting established scientific knowledge, reinforces and elaborates upon it. It is, moreover, in complete harmony with human nature.

All for the Sake of 31 Days

The January 1983 elections in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh brought the Telegu Desam party, under the leadership of N.T. Rama Rao, into power. On August 16, 1984, however, N.T. Rama Rao's government was dismissed by the then governor Mr. Ram Lal, and a Telegu Desam dissident, N.T. Bhaskara Rao, invited to form a government in alliance with the Congress party. Mr. Bhaskara Rao was given 30 days to prove his majority in the 293 member state assembly.

Mr. Bhaskara Rao's group launched a concentrated effort at winning over MLA's. According to the *Hindustan Times* (September 13, 1984), a price of 2 million rupees was placed on the head of each MLA. What N. T. Rama Rao did was confine members loyal to him in his own Ramakrishna Studios. When Mr. Bhaskara Rao proved unable to prove his majority on the floor of the house within 30 days, his government became unconstitutional and was dismissed by the new state governor Mr. S.D. Sharma. On September 16, 1984, Mr. Sharma invited N.T. Rama Rao to once again form a government.

On September 19, 1984, The Times of India published a special report on events in Andhra Pradesh, highlighting the actions perpetrated by N.T. Bhaskara Rao during his short term of office. The month-long chief minister had released a state government fund of 100 Crore (1000 million) rupees and had started openly inviting members of the state assembly to "defect and be a minister." The writer continues:

"During his 31 day uncertain career as chief minister Mr. Bhaskara Rao behaved and acted as if he had come to stay for a hundred years. "

This is an apt description of the way everyone acts in this world. One is only in the world for a short period; it might only be for a 31 day spell. Yet people act as if they have come to the world to stay. How extraordinary it is that man should come into the world and live here as if he is never going to leave; yet departure from this world is inevitable, and comes sooner than he plans.

17 February 1985

As people live, so they die... and so they will be raised up.

People die the way they have lived. (A cancer specialist, quoted in *The Guardian Weekly*. November 25, 1984).

Quest for Civilization in Space

For the last twenty years the scientists in the West have been carrying out a strange kind of research – listening for life in space.

It appears that the modern theory of evolution has given rise to this quest. The explanations furnished to prove the evolutionary concept of life presuppose the existence of life forms in some parts of outer space, resembling the life forms on earth. The space flights, therefore, also aim, among other things, at contacting those forms of life. Such an assumption has led to the conviction that an extraterrestrial civilization exists.

In addition to space flights, huge antennas have been set up in the U.S.A. and other developed countries. These antennae are called Radio ears. They serve to send signals to outer space. Very highly sensitive instruments have also been installed to be able to receive the expected signals.

A commentator, reviewing these efforts, has summed it up in these words:

If you are really there, please call your friends.

(Time Magazine 21 March, 1983)

The existence of life and consciousness is a unique and exceptional phenomenon in the whole universe. Since this consciousness could never have come into being by itself, it necessarily involves, therefore, the existence in space of life and consciousness on a greater plane – the source of life on earth.

Modern man has admitted indirectly the possibility of a Creator. His existence, however, is being explained away in terms simply of there being some life forms in space – forms resembling ours, but not necessarily superior to them, just another form of civilization and not a Lord and a Creator. Whereas the truth of the matter is that the existence of a living man is evidence of a living God.

18 February 1985

Even in childhood, death is closer than life

Linda Kurtz writes that, even as a child, "I could see that there was probably no force as infallible as death, certainly not life, and also death was the single natural process that seemed to stand to reason."
(*The Guardian Weekly*, November 25, 1984)

Mohammad: The Prophet of Islam

Part I Chapter IV

Once a group of Rabbis came to the prophet. When they entered, instead of giving the normal "Assalamu alaikum" greeting ("may peace be upon you"), they said "Assamu alaikum", meaning "Death to you." Aisha heard this, and was not able to contain herself. "Death to you instead," she said; "May God damn you." The Prophet told Aisha not to answer back in this manner. "God is gentle," he said, "and He likes gentleness in every matter." In truth, there is no more effective method of winning a person's heart than by returning his harsh words with soft ones. It is possible to withstand armed onslaught, but noble conduct is a force in itself that no one can resist. It is sure to win over all in every situation.

The Prophet made peace with the Quraish at Hudaibiya (6AH) on three conditions: one was that if any non-Muslim accepted Islam and entered the Muslim camp, he would not be returned to the Muslims. While this treaty was being made a Meccan youth by the name of Abu Jandal escaped from Mecca and came to Hudaibiya, his body bearing bruises where chains had rubbed into his skin. "Save me from the enemy!" he cried to the Muslims. This was an extremely sensitive moment. The companions of the Prophet drew their swords. The sight of Abu Jandal had aroused the Muslims' feelings to such a degree that most of them wanted to break the treaty and save his life. The Quraish, meanwhile, were reminding the Prophet that this was his first chance to abide by the pact that had been made between them. Finally the Prophet decided that he could not go back on the terms that had been agreed upon. Painful as this decision was for the Muslims, Abu Jandal was returned to the Quraish. Outwardly, what the Prophet seemed to be doing was putting an oppressed person into the hands of his oppressors. But in effect the oppressors were confounded by this unique display of principled conduct on the part of the Prophet. It was now no ordinary matter for them to take Abu Jandal away and imprison him; rather the event became symbolic of their own degradation as opposed to the moral ascendancy of Islam. The result of this was that the people of Mecca were overcome by the high ethical standards of Islam. Many started to embrace Islam. Abu Jandal's very presence in Mecca became a living testament to the truth of the Prophet's faith.

Eventually Abu Jandal, even as a prisoner, appeared to his captives as a threat to their national security. They deemed it prudent to free him and deport him from Mecca.

While he was living in Medina, where he had attained religious and political leadership, the prophet sent some riders to Najd, the inhabitants of which were his sworn enemies. On the way, they came across the ruler of the city of Yamama, Thamama Ibn Uthal. They took him captive and brought him to Medina, where they tied him up against a pillar of the mosque. The Prophet came to enquire for him. "If you kill me," Thamama said, "then my people will avenge my blood; and if you release me, then I will always be indebted to you. If its money you want, then I am ready to give you as much as you desire." The Prophet did not kill Thamama physically, but by his humane treatment he conquered the man's soul.

After his release, Thamama went to a nearby garden, had a bath, and then returned to the mosque. People wondered what he had come back for. But when he proclaimed his conversion to Islam by pronouncing the testimony of faith in a loud voice, then people realized that, by releasing Thamama, the Prophet had in effect taken him captive for all time. Thamama then went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. When the people of Mecca heard of his conversion, they told him that he had lost his faith. "I have not lost my faith," Thamama answered. "Rather I have adopted the faith of God and His Prophet." Thamama, moreover, became a source of strength to Islam. Yamama was one of the main places from which the people of Mecca used to collect grain. Thamama told them that without the permission of the Prophet Mohammad, he would not provide them with a single grain. The case of Thamama shows that noble conduct – though it may appear worthless – is something which can win the world.

High ethics mean practicing what one preaches; treating the weak with the same courtesy and deference as one shows to the strong; setting the same standards for oneself as one sets for others; never budging from one's principles; maintaining a high moral bearing even when others stoop to the depths of degradation. From this point of view, the prophet of Islam stood at the pinnacle of human ethics, never abandoning the lofty standards that he preached. Expediency or dispute could not make him resort to unethical conduct. No evidence could be more substantial in this regard than that of his closest companions.

Sa'eed Ibn Hisham belonged to the generation immediately following that of the Prophet Mohammad, may peace be upon him. He once asked Aisha, widow of the prophet, about her late husband's character. "He was a personification of the Quran," Aisha replied. That is to say, the Prophet moulded his own life in accordance with the ideal pattern of life which he presented to others in the form of the Quran. Anis Ibn Malik served the prophet for ten years. He says that the Prophet never even rebuked him: "When I did something, he never questioned my manner of doing it; and when I did not do something, he never questioned my failure to do it. He was the most good-natured of all men." According to Aisha, the Prophet never beat a servant, woman or anyone else. To be sure, he fought for what was righteous. Yet, when he had to choose between two alternatives, he would take the easier course, unless of course it involved sin: no one was more careful to avoid sin than he. He never sought revenge – on his own behalf – for any wrong done to him personally. Only if God's commandments had been broken would be meted out retribution for the sake of God.

It was this conduct on the part of the Prophet which made him respected even in the eyes of his enemies. His followers stood by him through all kinds of hardship and misfortune. He was as loved in times of oppression as in times of victory and supremacy. His immediate followers found him without blemish – just as he appeared from afar. He provided mankind with an inimitable model of exemplary conduct.

The principles on which the Prophet based his life were moulded by his sublime disposition. These principles never wavered. They formed a permanent part of his life, as the character which moulded them was permanent. He applied them equally to those who had harmed or aggrieved him.

Even in pre-Islamic times – known as the Age of Ignorance – the office of gate-keeper of the Ka'aba had been held in high esteem. From ancient times the task had been allotted to one particular family. In the

time of the Prophet Mohammad a member of this family – Uthman Ibn Talha – was gatekeeper. The keys of the House of God remained in his custody.

Bukhari, the greatest compiler of traditions of the Prophet (Hadith), has related how the Prophet, before his emigration to Medina, once desired to go inside the Ka'aba for worship. He asked Uthman for the keys, so that he could open the gate. Uthman refused and insulted the Prophet. "Uthman," the Prophet said, "perhaps you will see that one day I will have these keys in my hands. I will have the power to dispose of them as I will." "It will be a day of disgrace and woe for the Quraish when the keys of the Ka'aba are handed over to one like you," Uthman retorted.

Then the time came when the Prophet conquered Mecca and reigned supreme there. The first thing he did on entering the holy city was to go to the House of God. Seven times he circumambulated the Ka'aba. Then he summoned Uthman Ibn Talha. According to one account, Uthman had become a Muslim during the period in between the peace of Hudaibiyya and the Conquest of Mecca. The Prophet took the keys from him, opened the gate of the Ka'aba, and went inside. He remained there for a while, demolishing the idols that remained standing within its walls.

Then he came outside, holding the keys in his hands. On his lips was this verse of the Quran:

"God commands you to hand back your trusts to their rightful owners." (4:58)

It was then that Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, stood up: "God bless you," he said to the prophet, "but we Banu Hashim have always been entrusted with the task of bearing water for pilgrims. Now is the time to take over the office of gatekeeper as well." The Prophet did not reply to Ali, and asked where Uthman Ibn Talha was. When he came forward, the Prophet handed the keys over to him. "Uthman," he said, "here are your keys. This is a day of righteousness and fulfillment of promises. They will remain in your family from generation to generation. Only a wrong-doer can take them away from you."

This action of the Prophet illustrates that a Muslim should be meticulous in fulfilling obligations and returning trusts. Even if he has been treated acrimoniously by the one with whom he is dealing, he should still pay him his full due. However much it may hurt him, he should never deny a person his right.

When worldly people gain power, the first thing they do is punish their opponents, removing them from their posts and installing their own devotees instead. Every person in power thinks in terms of supporters or opponents. Promoting supporters and demoting opponents as an essential part of their policy. But when the prophet of Islam gained power in Arabia, he did quite the opposite. He did not look at matters in terms of supporters and opponents; he considered only what was right and fair. He buried all grudges and dealt with every one as justice and compassion would demand.

The Prophet and His Companions

When one is honoured with True faith dishonour disappears

While emigrating from Mecca to Medina, the Prophet of Islam came across two men in the mountain pass of Rakooba. He invited them to Islam, and they accepted the invitation. He asked them their names, and they said they belonged to the tribe of Aslam. They were bandits, they told him, and for this reason people called them "Muhanan", or "The Two Despicable Ones". "No," the Prophet said, "you are two honourable ones." (Masnad Imam Ahmad)

Living as a community under all conditions

Abu Darda reported the Prophet as saying: "If there are just three people, living in a village or out in the desert, and they do not pray in congregation, then the Devil will take possession of them. Prayer in congregation is of prime importance to you, for a wolf devours the sheep that strays on its own. Satan is like a wolf, waiting to devour any person he finds alone." (Targheeb wa tarheeb)

Everyone has something to give

The Prophet said. "For every limb of man's body, for every new day, there is an act of charity to be performed. To judge fairly between two people is an act of charity. To give someone a hand climbing on his mount, or taking luggage off it, is an act of charity. A good word is an act of charity. To remove any obstacle from a path is an act of charity." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Dearest to god is one with the best character

A few of the Companions were sitting with the Prophet. So silent were they that it was as if there were birds perched upon their heads. No one was saying a word, but some people came up and asked: "Who does God love most among His servants?" "The one with the best character," the Prophet replied. (Tabrani, Ibn Habban)

Paying back what one owes others

A few days before he died, the Prophet delivered an unusually long speech. Finally he said: "I want to be able to present a clean sheet of my life to God. If I owe anybody anything, which I forgot to repay, or have physically or mentally harmed anyone without my knowledge, then I request him to accept compensation or forgive me." The Prophet finished speaking and waited a while, but no one spoke up. He then prayed the early afternoon prayer, after which he repeated his request. A man rose and said: "Prophet of God, you owe me five dirhams." The Prophet gave instructions for him to be repaid, there and then.

Forsaking this world for the next

Aisha says that one of the Companions came to the prophet and said to him: I have two slaves who persistently deceive, betray and disobey me. I beat them and scold them in return. How do I stand in relation to them?" The Prophet replied: "Their disobedience, perfidy and deception will be weighed up, and so will the reprisals you take against them. If your reprisals are equal to their crimes then the two will balance one another out: nothing will be left owing to you, and you will not owe anything. And if your reprisals are less than their crimes then you will be paid the balance. But if the reprisals you took against them are more weighty than the crimes they committed, then they will be repaid from the grace that was previously yours." The man started crying in front of the Prophet. "Why, have you not read the Book of God," the Prophet said to him: "And We shall set up just scales on the Day of Resurrection, so that no man shall in the least be wronged. Actions as small as a grain of mustard seed We will bring (to be weighed out). And sufficient are We as reckoners (21:47)." Prophet of God, "the man said," I think it would be best for me to be rid of them. You are witness to the fact that I have freed them all. (Masnad Imam Ahmad)

Being just to all, whether weak or strong

Muawiya Ibn Abu Sufyan asked Dhirar to tell him about Ali. Part of Dhirar's description of Ali's qualities went like this: "He lived among us like one of us. No one who was in the wrong would have any hope that Ali would side with him, no matter how powerful he was, and no one who was weak would have cause for despair of being treated justly by him."